Dear Dick, 8/11/73

Your letter of the 6th is less of a surprise than you may have expected. What is a welcome surprise and a very encouraging thing is the absence of the emotions that usually accompnay such breakups. From my observation they frequently embitter either or both and when there are children, only to often this is transmitted to the children. When there is this bitterness, because the children most often go with the mother and are better off with her if they are young, they suffer the lack of a father, and if he is little more than a real figure, it is a lack that later shows itself.

The experience cannot possibly have been as unemotional as your letter. It is so good that so soon, so close, you can still stand back and take a calm look.

There was an indefinite something I couldn't latch onto I think the last time you were here, when you were sitting at the old walnut table in the living room and reading copy for me, that made me wonder if this is the way things were then. As I recall, you had then left your family in Trenton and came here alone, not one of the times you had left Canada alone.

If it had to happen, it is best that it did. If the past several years were bad for both of you, take comfort that it is probably much better for your girls that they reached an age where it can be partially comprehensible to them. It should also be less of a blow to them at 8 and 11, and the 11 will be able to help the understanding of the 8.

For a tippler, you drank very little when you were here.

Much younger than you I was a drunk but also never an alcoholic. I don't really know why, except that I enjoyed it. It was when I was working on the morning paper. I remember I began to get concerned about it - I couldn't have been 20 - and decided all of a sudden on a way to show myself I wasn't hooked. The legislature was going into a special session that emant extra assignments for me. I decided that for the length of that session I would not take a drop and would pour for the others, all older, every swig they took that was not straight from the bottle.

It was no real struggle and since then has never been a problem, although there was a time in Washington when I'd hit it hard. Again, it was that - liked it.

I haven't thrown one down in so many years I can't remember when. I sip.

Off and on lately, for selfish reasons and from curiosity, I've thought of you. Howard was here a short while back and we commented on your detachment. My selfish reason is the need for a copy-reader. Lil is fine for catching typographical, grammatical errors and interminable sentences, but not for editing. Now she is disspirited and doesn't catch all the typos. She has just, after delaying it, begun to type WATERGATE: FASCISM'S FLOODGATE, for which I have no prospect. It is a detailed and definitive approach of my own, explicitly stated in a long foreword, "The Past Is Prologue", that of an intelligence analyst suddenly confronted with this impossible thing and faced with the duty of making it comprehensible to higher authority (for me the people). I write big gobs on impulse, intending to work them in as I go, and from the front I have drafted close to 40,000 words. I've reread only the foreword, after Lil did this time instead of before, so she could start typing. I'm not undertaking to make major changes in it nor am I taking the time to think if they should be made. The work is too enormous and, if it is to have any chance of either publication or doing good, it must be rushed. I have kept up with the hearings, often enough anticipating their disclosures and line, through the whitewash. It has been stimulating to write Nixon's pronouncements before he makes them and have him faithful to them, the one thing except self and authoritarianism I can say he has been faithful to. And it is a kind of comfort at 60, with and after all the troubles we have and had, to find that I can see see through the black and then know that I saw clearly and accurately. I won't go into all of it now, for in time you'll see. I do tell you this: I have what officials have not disclosed, I presume because they avoid, and it has serious meaning. And I think I'm putting it all together as others will not.

There is nothing new on the assassinations. Some papers are available and I can't afford them. The tress bear more and more nuts. I have yet to see an account of the remarks of the last guy to see the film, I think Chapman. Nor has anyone written me about it. I caught it on an early morning newscast from Chicago. Best!!!